

Owsley County Snow Bound Pilot Virtual Instruction Program

Action Plan

It is important to note that it is the opinion of Owsley County instructional staff (administrators and teachers) that the instructional methods being highlighted in this plan encompass the direction of the district for delivering and engaging students in instruction and learning in a 24/7 configuration. Learning should not and cannot be confined to the school day or school building. By engaging in this program, Owsley County Schools will have an opportunity to launch this type of initiative while learning how to extend such practices and methodology to all content areas, for all students, every day.

Introduction

During the past 5 school years, Owsley County students were not in school an average of more than 20 days per year for inclement weather and illness. During these days missed, instructional time, flow of instruction, and meaningful learning were at a loss when students were not able to attend school.

Owsley County has been seeking technology-based instruction over the past two years, not exclusively for instruction outside of the school day, but to enhance classroom instruction. Facing lost and interrupted instructional time; the district is seeking to utilize the existing and additional technology-based instructional tools to ensure seamless instruction throughout the school year. Through the Promised Neighborhood Grant, Blackboard Learning has been purchased for K-12 use. Teachers have received training and assistance in developing course shells within Blackboard. The platform will be used to share resources and documents, provide instructional support, and use of discussion board.

Scope

For the 2013-14 school year snow bound initiative, Owsley County School proposes to focus instruction on Reading, Language, Writing, and Mathematics. We also want to include a strong content emphasis around Arts and PLCS. The program will include monitoring and management of the assignment of activities, monitoring and management of student ability to complete internet-based activities, and monitoring and evaluation of student performance. Each grade level will utilize Blackboard Learning to deliver instruction. The program will be applied to all grade levels (K-12).

The Owsley County School District will develop a partnership for student learning with the Owsley County Public Library, Owsley County Action Team, the local telephone cooperative(PRTC), and utilize the Booneville Sentinel to assist parents/ guardians about snow day(s) activities and events.

Plan

Each grade level team of teachers at Owsley County Elementary and each content area teacher or content team of teachers at Owsley County High School will engage in planning and development in order to utilize technology-based modes of instruction for our students. Alternative plans will be developed for students that do not have accessibility to the internet at home. Both schools have fully functioning Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and these communities will be used to implement and monitor the program. The instructional program that is developed will be designed to deliver rigorous and relevant content to students during missed school days. The grade level teachers at Owsley County Elementary School have common planning and meet at least once weekly in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and content area teachers at Owsley County High School have common planning and meet at least once weekly in a PLC. During the month of December, teachers will meet during PLCs to plan the activities and the teachers will discuss the snow plans and requirements with their students. Information will be posted prominently on the district webpage as well as the school level and teacher level pages regarding assignments for days missed due to inclement weather or illnesses. Immediately following any days missed, teachers will meet in their PLCs to evaluate the process and results and make any revisions. Documentation will be kept on the results and any modifications made. Computer labs will be open and accessible with staff to assist students during these snow days for all students. One Call Now system will be used to communicate with parents via telephone of events or activities. Infinite Campus Parent Portal and Blackboard Learning will have assignments and communications available for parents to reference and teachers to use during these days.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

After piloting the snow-bound initiative for three years, Owsley County School district snow-bound program continues to evolve. Upon examination of data collected during the pilot, it has been determined that the program works best when student focus is centered around skills needed in Math/Language arts. Grade and content teams will work together to create cross-curricular, project-based lessons to ensure students are receiving rigorous and relevant content. Essentially, students will have 2 assignments: one assignment will center around a content based text and will require the students to complete a real world reading/writing task while the other assignment will be a project or product based Math task. These assignments will be aligned with the common core standards and may be a multiple day assignment with a project/product as the culminating event. Products/projects will be scored based on a rubric which will be posted so that the student has a clear understanding of what is expected, including timelines. Lessons will be designed so that a depth of knowledge and understanding is required to complete an assignment. Teachers are organized into teams based on their content and will work together to form these assignments. Delivery of instruction will take place using Blackboard. Teachers will use Blackboard to make available a variety of instructional tools such as articles, videos, links to webcasts, teacher classroom recordings, teacher generated PowerPoints, as well as others. Teachers will utilize the discussion board and chat features of Blackboard as well as be available at the school on snow days on a rotating schedule so that students will have sufficient support to successfully complete assignments.

Expected Impact

Owsley County Schools have participated in the snow-bound pilot initiative for two years. Data from Pre and post tests was collected during the 2011-12 school year. The Owsley County School District feels that the pre and post test data reflects that student learning has taken place. Excessive days missed due to inclement weather interrupts the flow of instruction and as a result the pacing of lessons is interrupted and in some cases stunted. Valuable classroom instruction time is spent re-teaching rather than continuing the pace of instruction. When students complete out of class assignments during snow days they stay focused on the content and are better prepared to continue when class resumes. Parental involvement is also impacted. Parent response was positive. Many parents expressed an interest in the activities students were required to complete. It provides a window into what students are expected to do at school. Due to the change in the accountability system for 2012, it is difficult to discern whether or not a positive or negative impact on test scores occurred. However, in the future we will be able to analyze data in order to make a determination of whether or not student growth is impacted due to completion of snow day assignments.

Timeline

Following waiver approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers will meet afterschool and during PLC's to plan a segment of instruction as well as rubrics and grading scales for accurate scoring, reporting and feedback to students. These work sessions will be facilitated by district and school instructional leaders with all assignments approved for rigor, relevance, and alignment to standards.• A schedule will be developed for teachers and administrators to report to the school building on subsequent snow days to facilitate computer labs, provide interventions and assistance to students, and to engage in other work relevant to the project.• Develop communication plan and disseminate communication/information to all stakeholders.• Provide student-specific orientation
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	to the program to ensure students understand the importance of the program.
Following snow days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students who may need access to technology a one week window to access technology and finalize assignment. • Using designed scoring guides and rubrics, teachers will score student work. • During Professional Learning Community meetings (PLCs), discuss findings related to quality of work, completion rate, etc. and make adjustments to communication and planning as needed. • District administrative staff will review student work/results to monitor program, make programmatic changes/suggestions, and continuously evaluate results.